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Turkey occupies a critical geopolitical space on the world scene. As a close American ally and member of NATO, it is emerging as an increasingly important economic, political, and military player. This report examines the role of the Turkish military in Turkey's political life. Turkey has maintained one of the only democratic political systems in that part of the world, and the armed forces have taken a central role in that development. However, the pressures of modernization combined with the maturation of Turkey's democratic tradition are forcing the Turkish military to refine their perceived role as protectors and guarantors of Kemal Ataturk's reforms undertaken over the past sixty years. Considering the upheavals underway in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the instability present in the nearby Gulf, Turkey's role is sure to grow in importance.

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## Part I Introduction

Except for Israel, in the Middle East there is not a clear empirical distinction between civilian and military authority or authorities. The western ideal that the armed forces should be nonpartisan and largely divorced from politics is not applicable in the Middle East. In many countries, military interference is not viewed with distaste nor is it clearly constitutionally prohibited. Indeed, in many cases military officers are among the most highly educated and technologically advanced and thus are often tapped ( or tap themselves ) to assume positions of governmental power.

Nevertheless, one can speak of civil - military separation, and confrontation, in modern day Turkey. The tradition of military disengagement from politics engendered by Ataturk, though three times breached since 1960, justifies discussion of Turkish politics in terms of a civil - military dichotomy. This paper seeks to explore military intervention in Turkish politics, and intends further to describe the military's guardianship of Kemalist reforms. After all, the Turkish military invokes Kemalism

as a legitimating principle every time it seizes power. We will examine various instances of the military's political involvement, all the while analyzing the process through which the military has come to terms with political change, revising some of their conceptions regarding Kemalist principles along the way. An emphasis is placed on the 1980 coup, because it was the most recent and far reaching of the interventions.

#### Historical Perspective

The military has played a central role in the forces that shaped today's Middle East. The period preceding European colonialism saw Islamic political systems dominated by military authoritarianism. Even while under European rule, military dominance persisted, but with native or imperial bureaucracies inserted for administration. The Europeans often co-opted local and regional military powers, playing one off another to prevent the ascendancy of a single group powerful enough to challenge the imperial structure. Only Islam was a more deeply influential institution in Middle East life. The Ottomans, though, possessed enough military strength to not

only resist western advances but to expand, often at the west's expense.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Ottomans suffered their first significant defeat in Europe. The Treaty of Carlowitz (1699), which ended fifteen years of fierce fighting across Austria, Poland, and Russia against the Islamic realm, stripped the Sultan of territory north of the Danube forever. 1 Despite growing weakness, the Ottomans were not easily eliminated from Europe, and into the late eighteenth century clung to most of their holdings. The dominant Western perception of the Ottomans was religious -- the power to the east was, first and foremost, Islamic.

Islam arose in the 7th century as a conquering faith which unified vast regions. Islam in its theology and jurisprudence granted a high degree of legitimacy to warfare, and asserted that the true faith could be spread by conquest as well as conversion. 2

From the earliest days, Muslim states were tribal in origin and relied on military power to preserve and expand the realm. Islam itself had emerged from a tribal society, and Islamic political systems often relied on tribal traditions in settling disputes, interacting with

neighbors, and in determining succession of power. The mark of a successful tribe was often military superiority. Political power came as a consequence of victory on the battlefield, and much like in the west, political leadership was often the prize for those still standing after battle.

Ottoman rule endured for more than six centuries, largely on the strength of repeated military victories at the edges of the empire, and because of the unique way it dealt with its vanquished subjects. The Ottomans allowed new subjects to retain most of their cultural, religious, and political heritage, but extracted taxes which financed the Empire's expansion. This formula lessened resistance to Ottoman rule, but raises the question: what were the Sultans after if not to convert peoples into Ottomans culturally? A part of the motivation had to be the sheer satisfaction the Sultans derived from military campaign and conquest. The dynasty was at its political and economic apex in periods of military expansion. It seems the two basic functions of government were the making of war and the collection of taxes to support the making of war.

Military influence was provided an agreeable climate by the absence of fixed rules of succession to the

Caliphate. 3 The rule of primogeniture, then common throughout Europe, carried no weight in the Ottoman court. Every male member of the royal family was eligible to reign as Sultan. The candidate with the strongest military backing usually prevailed to the throne. A system wherein military leaders had a direct influence on the paramount political decisions of the day was in place, and has not been completely dislodged to the present time.

The Ottoman state originated as a gazi amirate. The warrior spirit, cultivated by the ruling class, and the mythology constructed around it became part of Ottoman ideology. 4 During the empire's height, the Sultan mounted and frequently led a carefully planned annual campaign designed to achieve a particular objective. Highly mobile Turkish light cavalry had carried early Ottoman expansion across the Dardanelles into Europe. These tribal troops proved inadequate, however, when called upon to garrison conquered territory in the Balkans and were unreliable for more prolonged campaigns that took them far from the Anatolian heartland. A system was needed to establish a permanent professional army that included infantry and artillery -- two areas of weakness among the mounted Turkish gazis. The Janissary corps was the answer to the



Sultan's need for a professional, loyal, permanent force.

Janissaries were made, not born. Expeditions were regularly organized to collect Christian males from the Balkan provinces. They were converted to Islam and underwent intensive training that instilled in them a corporate identity. These slaves of the state were committed to celibacy and to a lifetime of service to the Sultan. Many eventually rose to prominence in the central government.

During the reign of Murad III (1574-95), standards were relaxed across the board to allow ethnic Turks to enlist as Janissaries. Regulations prohibiting marriage and land ownership were also dropped. By 1700, the ranks of the corps had swelled to 100,000 men and had become predominately Turkish in composition. This quantitative adjustment destroyed the qualitative advantage that the Janissaries had always exercised over their adversaries. They became rebellious and forceful in demanding privileges, challenged the strength of the central government, and deposed sultans in the 17th and 18th centuries. It wasn't until 1826 that a Sultan (Mahmud II) could crush the corps -- by sending in a newly created nizamiye (professional army). In less than 100 years,

members of the nizamiye itself would play a central role in a dramatic overthrow that would replace Ottomanism with a modern nation - state --- the Republic of Turkey.

#### Military in the Decline of Empire - Young Turks

The Ottoman decline during the 18th and 19th centuries was precipitated by stiff military resistance at the fringes of the empire, European economic and political penetration, growing nationalism in the provinces, and erosion in state bureaucracies brought on by corruption at all levels of government. Ottoman decline had deep ramifications for the military forces.

The army, along with the palace faithful, remained the largest, most elaborate, and most expensive part of the empire's ruling class. 6 Repeated military defeats at the hands of the Romanov and Hapsburg Empires reinforced the military's central position, as they were granted special privileges in order to boost their capabilities and reverse the decline. This attempt to modernize the Ottoman armed forces in isolation from all other palace functions served to expose Ottoman military leaders to western political concepts and methods, and they came to admire the perceived differences between traditional Ottoman existence and western modernity. With the importation of western

military instructors, begun in the late 18th century, and the substitution of the nizamiye for the unreliable janissaries, the army officers developed into the most westernized element in the empire. 7 The officer corps was populated by lower middle class recruits drawn from across "Turkish" regions of the Empire, and now with reforms in place, the officer corps became an obvious vehicle for merit advancement within the empire.

Western political beliefs -- representative government, rule of law, individual rights -- reached the empire's inhabitants first in the Balkans and later in the urban centers. These ideas undermined the principles dynastic absolutism was built upon, and gave momentum to emerging nationalistic fervor among the empire's polyglot subjects. Army officers were quick to embrace these new developments too, as they offered an escape from repeated military defeats and the prospect of a proven system capable of reestablishing military excellence. 8 By the late 19th century, the empire was hobbled and shrinking, now propped up by the British and the French in their effort to frustrate Russian ambitions in the region.

Military officers became the center of a secret, compartmentalized political organization starting in the

mid 19th century. In general terms, the organization advocated a transformation from dynastic rule to a western - style representative government. Abdulhamid II's attempts to reverse westernization in most areas except the military propelled military officers to the forefront of social change. Ottomans exiled by the Sultan constituted the other large body dedicated to the overthrow of the regime. Concentrated in Paris, they served as agitators abroad and as conduits for western ideas and political tenets. The organization came to be known as the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP). It was notable for the degree of secrecy it maintained in the face of a vast palace spy network, but also for its lack of a sweeping blueprint for change.

The CUP can hardly be described as a truly revolutionary organization. Its members were themselves part of the ruling elite, and had much to lose in a wholesale disruption of the prevailing structure. CUP members viewed Bolshevik gains in Russia and leftist movements in places like Mexico with distaste. It has been suggested that the Young Turks took action when they did primarily to suppress domestic leftist movements, but evidence is sketchy at best.

In July, 1908, Ottoman army officers centered in Macedonia carried out a rebellion, and demanded immediate restoration of the 1876 Constitution, long since ignored by Sultan Abdulhamid II. Lacking the military means to put down the revolt, the Sultan conceded to the demands of the CUP and a parliament was assembled. The CUP's wider aim was the transformation of the empire into a modern state, able to gain the allegiance of its citizens and resist European efforts at dismemberment. 9 Both goals were achieved eventually, but only after a protracted political and military struggle culminating in the establishment of Turkey in 1923.

The political turmoil following the 1908 movement was marked by steady loss of territory and demands by minority groups within Ottoman holdings for autonomy. Further weakened by splits between nationalist and liberal reformers, what was left of the empire reeled. The Young Turks, proclaiming the restoration of the Empire's civilian Constitution, rapidly converted civil rule into a military dictatorship, with an emasculated Sultan as its titular head.

A liberal government in place since 1910 was overthrown in January, 1913, in a military coup engineered

by the triumvirate of Enver, Cemal, and Talat--the first two young army officers whom the revolution had launched upon meteoric political careers. Enver Pasha emerged as the dominant dictatorial figure and entered the empire into the ruinous WW I. By war's end, the defeated empire was divided up among the victors largely on paper, if not on land, and occupation troops took up limited positions throughout what remained of the empire.

The decade from 1908-1918 had established the army as the dominant element on the political scene. 10 The following five years would witness the war of independence and the emergence of a towering hero -- Mustafa Kemal. The Republic would be born in 1923 -- and a cult of personality would blossom around the man whose bravery and tactical genius catapulted him to the forefront of political life.

The army's importance in Turkish politics was evident as the war of independence unfolded. The empire had been crushed, and Turkish nationalism itself was threatened by European partition. The period from 1918 - 1923 was one of conflict among numerous forces for control of Anatolia and Thrace. European forces, nationalists led by Kemal, and Ottoman reactionaries vied for control of the region. Nationalist forces scored numerous impressive

victories primarily against Greek forces in Anatolia, and advanced against European forces in the Turkish Straits. In October 1922, the Grand National Assembly (GNA) in Ankara legislated the abolition of remaining vestiges of Ottomanism, largely centered in Istanbul. Meanwhile, the nationalist fervor of the Turkish fighters forced the Allied powers to accede to a new peace treaty.

The nationalist government joined in negotiations with the Allies at the Lausanne Conference after a truce had been called. The treaty recognized Turkey's modern day borders and extracted minor concessions from the Turks on oversight of the straits and regarding Ottoman debt repayments and other short term economic concessions. Turkey thus emerged as the only power defeated in WW I to negotiate as an equal and to influence provisions of the peace treaty -- a direct result of the tenacity of the army.

The GNA proclaimed the Republic on October 29, 1923. Mustafa Kemal was named as its president, Ankara its capital, and the modern state of Turkey was born on the strength of military leaders and the forces they commanded.<sup>11</sup> The newly endowed citizenry would not forget the significance of the army's contributions, nor would the

military leaders let them.

### Modern Turkish Politics

Immediately after taking power, Mustafa Kemal, now Mustafa Ataturk, began to institute far reaching reforms designed to westernize Turkey. Ataturk envisioned Turkey as a modern, democratic, secular state, in which the military would abstain from direct involvement in the civil functions of government. 12 He prohibited military officers from serving concurrently in the Grand National Assembly, and he himself was never again seen in military uniform after assuming the presidency. Yet he was unable to check the pervasive influence of military leaders during his rule. He relied on the police function of the military to suppress dissent against his startling reforms. 13 Early military opposition evaporated soon enough, and eventually the military came to see itself as the ultimate guardians not just of the state, but of M. Kemal's domestic reforms as well.

The army, in vague constitutional passages, was granted the right to intervene in the affairs of state if a threat arose to the political system or to Kemalist



reforms. Still, Ataturk took steps to separate the military from its entrenched positions throughout the nascent state. The military's interests did not go unrepresented, however, even during the height of Ataturk's power. Until 1950 many influential leadership posts and at least 20 percent of the seats in the GNA were held by individuals having a military background. For nearly 30 years, the nation was governed by two military heroes of the War of Independence -- first Ataturk, and then, after his death in 1938, Ismet Inonu -- under a single party near dictatorship in which retired senior officers were strongly represented.

Among Ataturk's reforms, the most controversial and by far the most difficult to implement was his secularization drive. He set out to reduce the dominance of two Ottoman institutions -- the army and the clergy -- by legislating and maneuvering them out of place in order to start with a clean slate for the new republic. He had more more success against the clergy.

In 1924, traditional religious schools were closed, the seriat abolished, and the Caliphate ended. Islam was relegated to the private sector against considerable domestic resistance. Its once - dominant position in the

political elite was effectively terminated. Ataturk succeeded in eliminating a conspicuous vestige of the Ottoman structure, a pragmatic move designed to foster an environment where democratic institutions could then take root. This success contrasts sharply with his inability to subdue the military hierarchy by eliminating it from civic life. His efforts were hampered by the widespread perception that the military was responsible for the very existence of the newly - democratic, independence minded state.

Ataturk could hardly mount a vigorous campaign against the very institution most responsible for the existence of the new state, especially during a period of national development and international unrest. The populace probably would not have accepted a reduction in military power during such an uncertain time, particularly with the U.S.S.R., a long - time foe, poised to the north.

The military was considered an effective vehicle for change, not a reactionary pocket to be eroded. 14 Ataturk recognized the dangers of a deeply entrenched military presence in the political structure, but could not prevent it. Nevertheless, he mitigated the influence of the military by constructing a set of civilian institutions

designed to gradually usurp political influence from them.

Ataturk's prestige and growing power were the best guarantees that the armed forces would be placated with the security - oriented, non - political role he assigned to them. Military leaders under Ataturk were granted wide latitude in the handling of military affairs, further softening politicization of the officer corps.

Still, military considerations played a large role in determining national economic policy during the republic's first decade, and senior officers were often consulted regarding matters of national importance. Commanders in far flung regions often combined civil administration duties with their military assignments, a result of the shortage of trained civil administrators. 15 Even today, rural army units are more active in local civilian affairs than their urban counterparts, though this phenomenon is more a function of efficient use of a huge military than it is an indication of rural control by the armed forces.

Ataturk also succeeded by the powerful effect of his repeated admonitions against military interference in civil government. This legacy has been the driving force behind the disciplined way Turkish troops have returned to

the barracks following the coup - de'etats of recent decades.

#### The State and Kemalist Transformation

Frederick Frey writes that "the grand strategy (of the Ataturk Revolution) was that of making Turkey safe for the Westernized intellectuals who would lead her to modernity" 16 The accomplishment of this goal required a near monopolization of the state apparatus. The Kemalist regime maintained itself rather precariously, drawing upon the political capital accrued from military victory, a brilliant and charismatic leader, and a vigilant control over the army exercised personally by M. Kemal. A truly radical aspect of Kemalism, however, was its alteration of the ideological basis of the state. Berkes notes that

The national state could no longer maintain the...association between the state and religion in the way characteristic of the traditional polity. It became instead the instrument of the real aim of the Turkish transformation--modernization and economic development. 17

The regime sought to make the new Turkish state the instrument of Kemalist transformation. Since there were

"no Ottoman estates, no hereditary nobility, no autonomous clergy, no bourgeoisie, the strategy, as well as the ideological stances, of every elite group contending for power had to concentrate on the state" 18 The "impossibility of effecting, in the Ottoman society, the revolutionary conversion of economic resources into political power for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, which took place in the West" 19 had much to do with the fact that the majority of the wealthy merchants were Greek, Jewish, or Armenian. Such minorities were barred from exercising effective influence in a multi-ethnic but Muslim dominated state.

The Kemalist movement was dominated by the prominent officials of the ancien regime (M. Kemal himself being a decorated general in the Imperial Ottoman Army, and a one time aide-de-camp to the crown prince). By one estimate 93 percent of the staff officers in the Ottoman army, and 85 percent of the Ottoman civil servants took up positions in the newly established republican state.

#### Kemalism: a Tradition in the Making

Kemalism was a set of ideological stances which

addressed the major issues of Ottoman politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at the core of which lay the problem of westernization--i.e., how to relate to the West, how to cope with the Western impact, how to acquire the elusive secret of Western power and so on. The process of westernization, initiated by the military reforms of Selim III, gained momentum under Mahmud II encompassing the whole range of technology, education, civil administration, trade, finance, etc. These "westernizing influences" which brought "immense changes, on every level of social existence"<sup>20</sup> were not solely the work of westerners themselves but "some of the most crucial changes were due to vigorous and ruthless westernizers--rulers who sought to acquire and master the Western instruments of power, merchants anxious to make use of Western for amassing wealth, men of letters and of action fascinated by the potency of Western knowledge and ideas.

As Lewis stresses, "of all the groups in Middle Eastern society, the army officers have had the longest and most intensive exposure to Western influence, and have the most vital professional interest in modernization and reform (which) may may help explain the Middle Eastern

phenomenon, unusual in other parts of the world, of the professional officer as the spearhead of social change." 21 But as Serif Mardin points out, the civil bureaucrats have not been far behind and sometimes even surpassed their military colleagues when it comes to impulses toward Westernization.

For reasons which are not yet well understood, the Ottoman secular bureaucracy acquired increasing power during the eighteenth century in relation to the ulema and the military branch of Ottoman officialdom. But it is only in the context of the ideology of Ottoman officials, which gave priority to the preservation of the state above all other concerns, that we can understand how they could become sponsors of Westernization in the Ottoman Empire. 22

The guiding philosophy of the Ottoman bureaucrats was the "primacy of *raison d'etat*" meaning that the "viability of the state" had priority over everything else, including religion. 23 The preservation of the integrity of the state and the promotion of Islam were deemed to be the primary goals. However, in actual administrative practice, "officials dealt severely with any religious manifestations that escaped their control." 24

The doctrine of *raison d'etat* and its corollary that Western-inspired reform was the answer to the decline of the state were among the major components of Kemalism. So long as the Kemalist movement was in the hands of the

former Ottoman bureaucrats (civil and military) as was the case until 1947, the notion of the primacy of the state was to determine basic political attitudes.

As outlined by Mardin, the distinguishing feature of Kemalism was the view that "there could be no halfway house to Westernization" 25 As such it did deny a role to Islam as the central value-building core of society. While the Young Turks realized they "could not do away with Islam as long as the multi-ethnic Muslim composition of the state endured",26 for the Kemalists such a concern did not exist anymore. The corporate identity of the new state could now be defined in terms of Turkish nationalism.

In economic matters the the Kemalists adopted a brand of economic nationalism. The anti-Western sentiment in the economic field gained momentum during the Young Turk era, due to the way the Ottoman economy had come under foreign domination.

Thus Kemalism can be said to consist of a number of inter-related stances designed to both take advantage of Western technology and thought, while simultaneously resisting further Western economic subjugation. Kemalism thus developed into a political tradition, with the military as its primary custodians.



### The Kemalist Regime

The Republican People's Party (RPP) was founded in 1923 by Ataturk to represent the nationalist movement in elections and to serve as a vanguard party in supporting his reform program. By controlling the RPP, Ataturk also controlled the assembly and assured support there for the government he had appointed. 27 Ataturk regarded a stage of personal authoritarian rule as necessary for securing his reforms before entrusting the government of the country to the democratic process.

But opposition did exist. Misgivings about Ataturk's personal dominance and reforms took early form in a grouping of his old associates called the Progressive Republican Party. Ataturk was willing to experiment with a multiparty system and in 1924 installed the opposition leader as the prime minister. But soon after, a revolt broke out in the Kurdish region of the southeast, led by a hereditary chief of the Nakshibendi dervishes, which had been disbanded as part of Ataturk's reforms. Ataturk rushed legislation through the GNA granting sweeping emergency powers to the government for the next four years. The opposition party was outlawed, civil rights curtailed,

and the Turkish army brutally extinguished the revolt.

A plot to assassinate Ataturk was uncovered in 1926 and found to have originated with a former deputy who had opposed, among other things, abolition of the Caliphate. A sweeping investigation more notable for its speed than its attention to evidence ended in the hanging deaths of fifteen and the exile of many former close associates. This action was the only broad political purge of Ataturk's presidency, and connections among the RPP, the Kurdish revolt, and the assassination plot have never been decisively proven. The pattern of organized opposition, however, was broken, and Ataturk's rule and the single party state were never seriously challenged. Army officers played a prominent role in the tribunal court that carried out the purge (as they have in trials following more recent interventions). Among the convicted were a handful of former army officers who had turned against Ataturk.

Surprisingly, not one active duty military officer was implicated in the investigation, an indication of the discipline and loyalty M. Kemal commanded in the face of radical reforms like secularization. The armed forces during Ataturk's reign had surrendered a degree of limited political leverage, but remained powerful both behind the

political scenery and on the nation's streets. The military gained in power and status relative to other pre-independence institutions. Besides having wrested control of Anatolia's future from the Allies, the armed forces had suppressed challenges to Ataturk's startling reforms from both within and outside of the government. Respect for and deference to the military institution was then, as now, a stubborn vestige of the Ottoman legacy.

The day after Ataturk's death in 1938, the GNA elected his chief lieutenant, Inonu, as president. The stability of the new republic was evident in the smoothness of the presidential succession. Ataturk was laid to rest in what is today a national shrine: a mausoleum high on an Ankara hill, symbolically overlooking the Grand National Assembly chambers. The army guards the shrine; competition among Turkish soldiers for the honor of standing guard duty is fierce.

Turkey under Inonu largely avoided participation in WW II, notwithstanding its declaration of war against Germany at war's end. Turkish military forces engaged in no hostilities, however. Turkey's neutrality is widely viewed as a foreign policy victory for the young nation. The policy was inspired by fear that the Soviets would find

an excuse to emplace troops on Turkish soil; to "liberate" the nation as it were. Also, the nation's bitter WW I experience stayed with the many former military officers now seated in the GNA, and as a group they prevented entry into the foray. Inonu made it clear that Turkish soldiers would respond to territorial threats, but never went beyond that stance. Germany's early successes impressed public opinion in Turkey and contributed to increased pro - German sentiment, even in some official and military circles. Despite German pressure, Turkey never permitted passage of German troops, ships, or aircraft through or over Turkey and its waters, including the Straits.

Following WW II, the government relaxed the suspension of civil rights and allowed an opposition -- the Democrat Party (DP) -- to form in 1946. The DP prevailed in the 1950 general election, winning 408 GNA seats to just 69 to the RPP. Celal Bayar assumed the presidency and named Adnan Menderes prime minister.

The election results meant Ataturk's RPP had lost the political dominance it had enjoyed since the republic's birth. The armed forces lever -- former officers serving in the GNA -- now were defeated in large numbers. Many retired into obscurity, but others gained civil positions

in the burgeoning state bureaucracy and continued to exercise influence over the course of events. 28 The DP's platform was perceived as anti - Kemalist by many uniformed and retired officers, and suspicion grew about the DP's intentions, particularly their dedication to strict secularization.

Menderes reduced state participation in the economy and encouraged direct foreign investment for industrial development. He soon took steps to consolidate power in the hands of the DP. The multi - party political trial initiated by Inonu soon deteriorated into another form of authoritarianism. The GNA enacted laws designed to stifle public criticism, cripple the opposition parties, and bring the administrative and judicial branches of the government under the party's control. The civil service and state apparatus swelled with party loyalists. New press restrictions inhibited discussion of public issues. Even Ataturk's RPP was largely silenced and neutralized by DPP legislation. Menderes sought to broaden rural support by allowing government financing of selected Islamic institutions and further eased restrictions on religious activities.

As the 1950s progressed, military officers'

distaste for DP policies grew. As a fixed income, largely urban group, they were disproportionately hurt by inflation, the result of Menderes' economic program. They felt threatened by the political recognition given the rural citizenry by DP policies such as de - secularization, and disapproved of the erosion Kemalist reforms were experiencing under Menderes. 29

Menderes sought to appease the armed forces by increasing promotions, but only for those officers deemed loyal to the party. Many officers were alienated by the politicization of the top command and by the perception that the needs of the party were subordinating the needs of the state. Intervention was possible in the mid to late 1950s, but Ataturk's admonition was still fresh in the military's mind. Also, Turkey was striving to gain acceptance to a variety of western organizations, notably NATO, and officers did not want to jeopardize inclusion by giving the appearance of domestic instability. Besides, the highest echelons of command were beholden to the DP to one degree or another and did not support outright action, but rather preferred to rely on persuasion from within the government.

Military dissatisfaction in the field grew sharply

early in the spring of 1960, when Menderes ordered infantry units to suppress meetings of the political opposition and the student protests that followed. Martial law descended on Ankara and Istanbul, grudgingly imposed by regional army units. The economy was weak and sinking fast. Activity around military bases increased noticeably, but Menderes and GNA deputies did not realize the true intent behind these military movements.

Part 2-- First Intervention--a Call to Restore Kemalism

Mindful of Ataturk's admonition against military involvement in civilian politics, but convinced that the major role of the military was to act as guardians of the Constitution and Kemalism, the Turkish army staged a near - bloodless coup on 27 May 1960. Under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff Cemal Gursel, army units seized the principal government buildings and communications centers and arrested President Bayar, Prime Minister Menderes, and most of the DP representatives. A large number of other public officials appointed by or sympathetic to the DP were detained, including army generals deemed as unreliable for their previous support of

the government. Some senior commanders had been convinced, primarily by less senior colonels and majors, that the government had departed from Kemalist principles and that the republic was in imminent danger of disintegration. Those arrested were charged with abrogating the Constitution and instituting a dictatorship.

The thirty - eight officers who had organized the coup replaced the government with their own -- the Committee of National Unity (CNU). The core leaders of the CNU had been charter members of the "Ataturkist Society", formed in 1955 at the Army Staff College in Istanbul (incidentally the same school I'll attend in July), where political debate seemed part of the curriculum. Its initial aim was to seek military reforms designed to end the politicization of the officer corps. Similar groups sprang up in Ankara, but their vigor was attenuated under the watchful eye of the government.

The CNU came to set their energies against Turkey's political and economic turmoil. The group concluded they must bend the ear of a high - ranking general to serve as a rallying point in order to preserve military unity and command structure. 30 In 1958, the group discovered in newly appointed General Gursel the candidate they needed.



Select members of the group were given key posts in the general staff in Ankara by Gursel.

It became imperative that the CNU define their long-range objectives. The conspirators came to believe, by the spring of 1959, that civil war might break out unless the DP left power. Plans for the coup were laid. But the plotters found themselves increasingly divided in their ideas of what to do after they came to power. One option was to transfer power to the RPP which was immediately rejected. Other options were contingent upon the desired scope and duration of military rule. There were those who were inclined to see the army undertaking fundamental reforms requiring a long-term stay in power. Col. Alpaslan Turkes was one of those who argued that "relatively backward countries" could not develop rapidly enough under pluralist regimes. Parliamentary democracy worked slowly, and essentially catered to factional interests. The system was run by politicians with "votes in their minds" who would not be able to execute the kind of unpopular measures necessary for development. Therefore, the army had to seize power and hold onto it "until the basis of a strong executive authority was established." 31

The views articulated by Turkes sound familiar. They bear the mark of the Keamalist era: the urgency of industrial development, the belief in direct state action without the fetters of parliamentary democracy, and the incompatibility of rapid development and pluralist democracy. These had been the dominant themes which provided the rationale for authoritarian, Kemalist etatism up to that point.

The junta came to power lacking a comprehensive blueprint for social and economic reform. They perceived their mission as largely political and proved conservative. They preserved the inherited parliamentary system, but constructed new methods of protecting it by injecting more military oversight and consultation into the process. By and large, though, no significant reforms were effected. The military hanged Menderes and a handful of his allies, a brutal move that drew harsh criticism from around the world. A court consisting of military officers handed out the punishment for the men who had challenged Ataturk's vision. The executions had a chilling effect on Turkish politics for many years.

One of the first acts of the NUC regime was to commission a group of law professors to design a new

constitution and frame new election laws. A cabinet composed of civilians was appointed. The Constitutional Commission produced a report on May 28, 1960 (a day after the coup) which sought to provide the rationale for the coup:

This...was not an ordinary political coup d'etat. The political power which should represent the conception of State, law, justice, and public service, had for months, even years, lost this character, and had become a material force representing personal power and ambition and class interests.

The professors went on to proclaim:

The power of the State, which before all else should be a social power bound by law, was transformed into an instrument of this ambition and power. For this reason this political power lost all ties with its army...and fell into a position hostile to the State's genuine and main institutions, and to Ataturk's reforms. 32

High hopes were held by Kemalist restorationists, civilian and military alike, when the army seized power in May 1960. But indications that the expected restoration might fail to materialize soon became apparent. The initial resistance towards establishing a long-term regime came from within the NUC itself. As Ahmad points out

From the outset, the Committee was divided between those who wanted to restore power to the civilians as soon as possible and those who wanted to carry out reforms which would alter the political structure of the country. The latter scheme would involve military rule for at least

four years...The first group, led by Gursel and the generals, came to be known as the moderates; the second group, consisting of junior officers up to the rank of colonel, came to be designated the radicals or extremists. 33

As it turned out, the fourteen 'radicals' were purged out in November 1960, barely six months after the seizure of power. Apart from their relative youth the distinguishing feature of the purged 'radicals' was their advocacy of a "more firmly controlled and centralized implementation of the Ataturk reforms and a longer period of military tutelage than was favored by the remainder of the NUC." 34

The demise of the fourteen meant that the full restoration of Kemalism was not in the cards. This created some reaction among junior army officers. Ahmad remarks that

'The Fourteen' had represented a radicalism created by a lack of faith in the ability of the politicians and the established institutions to solve the country's problems, and this radicalism was to be found throughout the military... One consequence of their dismissal was the re-establishment of conspiratorial groups within the armed forces. 35

The purge may be explained more simply by the fact that fourteen relatively junior officers, not necessarily representing all segments of the armed forces or having their full confidence, had inherited formal power.

By June 1961 an unofficial body based in the regular army, known as the Armed Forces Union, had assumed control over political decision making. Political parties had been allowed to resume their activities in April 1961. In July 1961 a referendum was held for the approval of the new constitution in which 38 percent voted against. The decision to allow elections was taken by the AFU; in the meantime they held consultations with various party leaders. The party leaders issued a joint declaration in which they promised to abstain from a number of actions including criticism of the May 27 coup, and the verdicts in the trials of the DP leaders, then continuing. The September 5 declaration by the party leaders established the basis of understanding by which the army was to oversee the political process.

The first manifestation of this new understanding was not long in coming. When in the October elections RPP failed to secure a majority and the 'neo-Democrat' parties held the balance in their favor, AFU decided to take action. Ten generals and twenty-eight colonels issued a document known as the '21 October Protocol'. AFU threatened to annul the elections, and seize power if certain conditions were not met. The aftermath of the

protocol is summed up by Ahmad:

The protocol had the desired effect on the neo-Democratic parties. On 24 October the party leaders were summoned by the army commanders to the President's residence, where they signed a protocol of their own. They agreed not to have the assembly pass laws reinstating officers retired by the NUC and not to seek amnesty for the Democrats sentenced at Yassiada. They also promised to have General Gursel elected President of the Republic, and to accept Inonu as Prime Minister. The two chambers convened on 26 October and Gursel was duly elected President. 36

The NUC episode has raised some questions as to the role of the army in Turkish politics. Some criticized the army for behaving too much like "orthodox politicians"--and with a limited support base at that--rather than like "problem-solving soldiers", thus missing "what was a unique opportunity for Turkey to return to the road of rapid development" 37 Weiker remarks that "the amount of authority which the NUC relinquished to the Constituent Assembly can only be noted with amazement" 38

At certain times the NUC period appeared more like the rule of the professorate than a military regime. But this should not obscure the fact that something of a restoration of Kemalism had been attempted by a number of 'radical' NUC officers who had considerable support in the army and elsewhere. While a full-scale restoration of

Kemalism did not take place, the coup resulted in a restoration of sorts. Inonu was asked to form a government in October 1961 returning to the prime ministry, a post he last held back in 1937.

#### Prelude to the 1971 Coup or Memorandum

The following 36 months saw the regime unable to get on with reforms and keep order, a result of persistent coalition gridlock. The October 1965 general election gave the Justice Party (JP) a clear majority, allowing the new Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, to form a single party government and claim a popular mandate for his legislative program. Demirel was once a protege of Menderes. Although Demirel cultivated a pragmatic and technocratic image for the new party, the JP inherited the DP's identification with right - wing populism and catered to the same rural, broadly - based constituency. 39

The late 1960s were years of almost continuous growth for the Turkish economy. After the 1965 elections, the economy was dominated by the laissez faire policies of the Justice Party, in terms of both the domestic economy and foreign trade. An import-substitution economy was

introduced in a frenetic tempo, geared towards consumer products. The social composition of Turkey was experiencing equally rapid change. This was evidenced by the massive workers' demonstration in the Istanbul metropolitan area in June 1970. There were violent clashes with the police and some casualties. Unrest in the universities was also gathering momentum. 40

These rapid economic and social changes affected political alignments too. Cracks began to appear in the 'JP coalition' composed of big business, small manufacturers, small traders, landowners, and peasantry. This group was primarily held together by its opposition to RPP. In February 1970 the JP government was brought down when dissidents within the party voted against the budget. Though a minority JP government was subsequently formed, it was clear that the socio-economic changes of the 1965-70 period had exacted its toll on JP as well.

Meanwhile, increasing discontent was noted in the armed forces. First, there was the arrest of two colonels in May 1970. Then, in July 1970, 56 generals and 516 colonels were retired prematurely. From September 1970 onwards there were unmistakable signs the army was turning restless. The newly appointed air force commander Gen.



Muhsin Batur sent a letter to the chief of general staff and other commanders indicating that unless "a radical programme of reform was introduced immediately and backed by the armed forces" it would be difficult to see how "an orderly parliamentary regime could be maintained." 41 A second letter was presented by Batur in November 1970, this time to President (and former general) Sunay, proposing that the National Security Council should be expanded to include all ranks of officers from "lieutenant to general." Batur issued a strong warning that unrest in the armed forces had reached a dangerous level. President Sunay was seen on a tour of military commands across the country shortly thereafter. The high command appeared to be on top of the situation, for the time being at least.

By January 1971 urban guerilla activity, bank robberies, kidnappings, and student unrest had reached unprecedented levels. There was also a sustained propaganda campaign in the leftist press depicting the army as 'allies with the bourgeoisie' and in the 'service of U.S. imperialism'. Gen. Tagmac's statement, aired on Turkish TV and radio on February 6, 1970, reflects the high command's growing exasperation:

It is not possible anymore to determine how much longer the armed forces will patiently resist the

hostile attacks. In conducting their fundamental duty within the constitution and democratic system, the armed forces deem imperative a return to the course of Ataturk reforms. 42

The warning produced no discernible effects as the spate of anarchy, terrorism, and the near paralysis of the universities continued unabated. On March 3, Tagmac addressed a gathering of most of the active generals in the country, about 300 in all. At the meeting he is reported to have stressed the theme of armed forces unity. A week later, on March 10, an emergency meeting of the Supreme Military Council was held. It is at this meeting that the decision to intervene was taken. Two days later, on March 12 1971, the high command issued its now-famous memorandum demanding the resignation of the JP government.

Though the exact details of the 1971 coup are not readily available, the manner and the timing of the coup indicated that a rightist conspiracy was gaining ground in the army. A coup had been planned by a group of officers, including a number of younger generals, for the night of March 10. Having aborted it, the March 12 coup was a pre-emptive coup by the high command to forestall any further action from below. The extent of the threat became apparent when reports appeared in the press a few days later that five generals, one admiral, and 35 colonels had

been retired. The most prominent figure in the conspiracy was Maj-Gen. Celil Gurkan whose presence in the group would indicate that the group was informed by "left-leaning radical views." 43 It was later reported that Gen. Batur had originally been offered leadership of the conspiracy , but had rejected it on grounds that the consprators' views were too radical for him. Thus, the purge of the 'radicals' occurred even before the coup had got off the ground. The army hierarchy remained intact.

The March 12 memorandum was a unique event in the annals of military intervention. For, while the generals blamed the parliament for most of Turkey's ills, they nevertheless decided to keep it open. The newly-appointed prime minister was held accountable to that very parliament. The first clause of the memorandum read:

(1) the Parliament and the Government, through their sustained policies, views, and actions, have driven our country into anarchy, fratricidal strife, and social and economic unrest. They have caused the public to lose all hope of rising to the level of contemporary civilization which was set for us by Ataturk as a goal, and have failed to realize the reforms stipulated in the Constitution.

The second clause noted that the current situation required "a strong and credible government...which will implement reformist laws within the context of democratic

principles." The third clause was the least ambiguous:

(3) Unless this is done quickly, the Turkish armed forces are determined to take over the administration of the State in accordance with the powers vested in them by the laws to protect and preserve the Turkish Republic. 44

A peculiar arrangement was put into place whereby the 1969 parliament remained open, and the parties were asked to 'loan' their members to serve in the cabinet. The prime minister, who was appointed by the military, was to ask for a vote of confidence from the parliament which included the JP cabinet who were ousted by the same military. However implausible the whole scheme might sound, a government was formed under Nihat Erim with 5 ministers from JP, 3 from RPP, and 14 non-party 'technocrats' considered to be the main component of the cabinet.

The Erim government received a vote of confidence in the Assembly on April 7, 1971. There were problems right from the start. The government program, mostly conceived by the 'technocratic' wing of the cabinet, viewed the structure of the economy as highly skewed, overly dependent on imports. The program also envisioned the nationalization of mineral resources, particularly oil. The government program was viewed by some businessmen as a

resurrection of etatism. Measures such as land reform and the taxation of agricultural incomes created significant constituencies opposing the program. Particularly vociferous were the small businessmen. A confrontation between the technocrats and the political/economic forces represented by JP was in the making.

As it turned out, it was the technocrats who crumbled, taking away with them possibly the last chance of restoring Kemalist etatism in the economy. The first casualty among the technocrats came in September 1971 when the energy minister, an outspoken critic of foreign oil companies, resigned. At the same time, Prime Minister Erim was faced with a cabinet crisis brought by JP's decision to withdraw its members from the government. Subsequently a three-cornered contest ensued between the army, JP, and the technocrats. It became clear that the army was reluctant to activate the third clause of the March 12 memorandum. The technocrats collectively resigned in December 1971. Their letter of resignation read:

We took office in a government which was founded with the aim of implementing, within the Ataturkist viewpoint, reforms and a developmental drive needed by the country. And we have resigned in the belief that it is no longer possible to carry out these aims. 45

The 1971-73 regime raised, perhaps for the last

time, the question of whether Kemalist development strategy was compatible with pluralist democracy. The question seemed to have been answered before the regime had run its full course. In Karpas's terms the "new bourgeoisie consisting of tradesmen, entrepreneurs, contractors, and the like, had become too strong to allow the old bureaucratic groups to revive the power arrangement prevailing from 1920 to 1946." 46

As the second military intervention drew to a close, civil-military relations entered a new phase. The experiences of the 1971-73 regime, combined with the memory of the earlier 1960-61 episode, had given both the military and the civilians perhaps a more realistic sense of their respective capabilities and limitations. The army must have started to doubt its own credentials to govern what had become an increasingly complex society. For the second time in a decade they had attempted to restructure the country along Kemalist lines only to see it chipped away at the bases. It became more apparent that the imposition of Kemalist solutions had become more problematic than ever. While such lessons were being digested by the military, the army's image as a political actor suffered damage. Sections of the intelligentsia, particularly those who had

formerly expected the army to provide lasting solutions, began to view the army as blocking the forces of progress. The loss of faith in Kemalist solutions among influential sections of the intelligentsia left the army in an increasingly isolated position.

#### 1970s--Social Unrest and Gradual Legislative Paralysis

Complex and persistent domestic problems -- unemployment, inflation, widespread dissent, and industrial stagnation -- plagued Turkish governments in the mid to late 1970s. The successful Cyprus invasion had been wildly popular at home, but drew protests and penalties from abroad, most prominently from the U.S. Once again, coalition noncooperation led to ineffective government in Ankara. Protest and political violence were on the rise, further intensifying parliamentary splits. The 1961 Constitution allowed, in the absence of a clear majority, two or more parties to stifle the legislative action of a rival party. Demirel and Ecevit had once again risen to political leadership positions atop their parties (Justice Party and People's Republican Party, respectively), but both renounced cooperation, despite the fact that the early

part of 1900 saw an average of ten politically motivated murders a day. 47 Predictably, Turkish military leaders were preparing the plans for a massive intervention designed to place Turkey back on the track envisioned by Ataturk a generation earlier.

Western leaders did not like what they saw when they looked at NATO's southeastern flank in 1979-1980. Greece and Turkey remained locked in the seemingly intractable Cyprus dispute. In Greece, anti - western, socialist - sponsored political groups were gaining influence at the national level, calling for expulsion of US bases and an end to NATO membership. Turkey's domestic chaos was deepening daily. Events in Afghanistan and Iran further intensified western scrutiny of Turkey's crisis. A massive western aid project spearheaded by the U.S. led to a \$1.6 billion economic recovery package in April 1980, designed to offset Turkey's economic crisis. U.S. and German arm twisting led to contributions from Saudi Arabia and Japan as well as from other, less enthusiastic western nations.

Western pressure to intervene mounted on Turkish military leaders into the summer of 1980 as the domestic crisis intensified. The June, 1980 issue of the



influential American military review Armed Forces Journal International contained an article which rather explicitly opined that Turkey's only hope was another military intervention. 48 Turkey's reliability as an ally was called into question elsewhere. An intervention was a bygone conclusion in the west.

Turkey's chief of staff, General Evren, began tours of inspection which took him to virtually every army and corps dotted around the country. Evren intended to gather as many opinions as possible before determining the nature and extent of the impending intervention. A consensus emerged that this intervention had to be more extensive than previous ones. Planners undertook a massive effort to chart fundamental changes in the Constitution, the state bureaucracy, and sociopolitical relations. They planned to implement reforms so far - reaching, such as prevention of coalition gridlock, as to make future interventions unnecessary.

Both Ecevit and Demirel attempted solutions throughout the summer of 1980, but failed to conclude an agreement after all was said and done. Still, government leaders seemed impervious to the potential for a large scale intervention, seeming to believe the martial law

carte blanche issued the military would appease indefinitely.

The coup was code named "Operation Flag", and had been distributed to field commanders for execution months before the actual September coup. But the coup was initially aborted by Evren who for various reasons (Turkey's impending receipt of an IMF loan package among them) decided to postpone the coup. The decision to abort had been a highly sensitive one, because some of the commanders party to this secret plan were retired in the interim. 49 The general staff was worried whether some of these newly retired commanders would seek vengeance by leaking details of the coup to the government or the press. But nothing of the sort happened. The sealed instructions for Operation Flag were returned unopened, emphasizing the strong discipline of the Turkish officers even when some may have been licking their wounded pride. This esprit de corps was rewarded after the coup as retired commanders were appointed to choice positions throughout the state apparatus.

Operation Flag was activated by General Evren on 11 September 1980. Across Turkey, members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Gendarme seized control of the civil

apparatus. Political activity was suspended and martial law with military rule by decree were enacted. Violence came to a swift halt as the bloodless intervention unfolded. Most Turks and foreign observers were relieved and thought the intervention long overdue. Government officials again seemed surprised, insulated perhaps by the turmoil and myopia prevalent in the GNA during the preceding months of crisis.

Virtually every political, governmental, and social institution was brought under military control or shut down altogether. 50 Shortly, thousands of persons associated with those institutions were dismissed. Arrests and detentions grew in conjunction with the suspension of most civil rights.

For the third time in less than twenty years, the Turkish military had seized power under provisions of the Internal Services Code of the Armed Forces which obligates the military to protect and safeguard the Turkish land and republic as stipulated by the Constitution. Article 35 reads: "The duty of the armed forces is to protect and safeguard the Turkish land and the Turkish Republic as stipulated in the Constitution." 51

### Third Intervention--the 1960 Coup

The Generals, led by Evren, had eight broad goals:

1. To take over complete administration. Whether or not the generals fully appreciated the scope of the effort they were undertaking at the time of the intervention, they made it clear that the total administration of the government at all levels was to be brought under their control. Some 1700 local mayors and council members were ousted as their duties were assumed by appointed provincial governors and staffs. Within the first year over 18,000 civil servants were dismissed or reprimanded in some fashion. In virtually every facet of public life, some means of personnel evaluation and control was established. The important aspect of this decision to take over completely was that the generals knew that a limited operation, as the 1971 coup by memorandum, would not do, if for no other reason than the terrorism and violence had permeated so completely public institutions. On the other hand, it is doubtful that the generals saw themselves as social reformers bent on finding solutions to the problems of social immobility, tax inequity, educational inopportunity, an aging population, and economic stagnation. Rather, they sought to reorder the political

and social institutions so that these problems could be maturely addressed by a responsible civil government in the future.

2. To return the government to civilian control. General Evren and his compatriots were quick in announcing their intention to return the government to civilian control, though it is likely they saw the return path to elected government as different and potentially longer than in 1961 and 1973. They also must have recognized that the failure of civil governments in the 1960s and 1970s may have been partly due to inadequate or misdirected actions by the military during their tenure following the interventions. Despite the checkered history of democratic processes in Turkey, the majority of the citizens are devoted to those processes.

3. To write a new Constitution. The previous Constitution, drafted in 1961 in the aftermath of the first military intervention, was a statement against the 1950's style of Turkish dominant - party government. It was a very liberal document calling for broad freedoms and autonomy for both citizens and associations, and was meant to restrict government authority. With this constitutional basis, the polity fragmented and became polarized. 52 No

party was able to obtain a stable majority and the legislative process bogged down.

The generals presented a new Constitution aimed at preventing such problems. It increased the powers of the President, streamlined the legislature, conditioned the rights of individuals and associations to the common good and welfare of the state, and it provided for the generals to play a continuing influential role in the affairs of state after return to civilian rule. An article called for the Constitution's approval by national referendum; another for the approval of Evren as the first President of the new republic for a seven year term. Additionally, the generals codified the banning of virtually all officials who had belonged to the pre - 12 September political parties, from any political activities for ten years.

4. To seek new political players. The generals blamed the four principal party leaders and their associates for contributing to the pre - 12 September violence. Constitutional rules prohibited all former parliamentarians from being involved in the creation and leadership of new political parties, and also prohibited and new party from resembling in any fashion or symbol the old parties.

That the generals meant to enforce these bans and

restrictions became quickly apparent when Mr. Ecevit sharply criticised the military regime in the foreign press. He spent the next four months in jail.

Their veto authority was used as a means of controlling emerging political parties. In the end, three carefully molded parties were allowed to contest the November 1983 elections. All were moderate and similarly oriented. Undoubtedly, this has been the most controversial aspect of the reforms, denying as it has representation to portions of the populace.

5. To depoliticize the society. In addition to controlling the political parties, the generals wanted politics removed from the government bureaucracy and societal institutions and associations. That was a tall order indeed, but the generals forged ahead. Politics was restricted to political parties. Associations of all types, including unions, could not have ties of any kind to any party or ideology. Civil servants, the police, judges and prosecutors, teaching staffs at universities, and professional members of the armed forces could not belong to political parties. Press and university activities were brought under an iron fisted centralized control agency. The generals responded to widespread criticism by declaring

the reforms as essential in a developing and immature democracy such as Turkey's.

6. To support Ozal economics. The generals opted for the continuation of the economic reform measures introduced in January 1980 during the last Demirel government. The reforms were championed by Turgut Ozal, and they centered on the nurturing of free market economics in almost direct opposition to the etatism of the Ataturkian reforms, which had led to the moribund state owned and operated system of economic enterprises. 53 But the generals felt a state operated economy was debilitating to economic growth and stability; in this instance, the soft pedaling of the Ataturk legacy was justified by acknowledging that times had changed and that a modern national economy needed to be able to operate in a complex, competitive, international market. While the generals may have understood all this, they were wise enough to put distance between themselves and Ozal to avoid the untoward appearance of peeling back an Ataturkian pillar.

The Ozal reforms probably would not have succeeded unless a military regime was in control. The reforms were for the most part implemented by decree; and a no strike, no lock out edict was beneficial to the improvement of



production in the aftermath of the coup. The reforms called for reduction of state subsidies, the free floating of the currency, and tax incentives for private industry and foreign investment. The result was reduced inflation and a jump in foreign investment, along with a weak lira. The cost of basics rose, and wage controls meant that workers experienced a decline in their overall standard of living.

7. To establish a new system of military oversight.

Provisional Article # 1 of the 1982 Constitution named the head of the state (General Evren) to be the President for seven years from the date of the Constitutional approval (November 1982). Provisional Article # 2 established a Presidential Council made up of the other four generals who were the co - leaders of the coup. Their term extended for six years from the date of the organization of the Grand National Assembly. The Presidential post was strengthened and the Presidential Council was mandated to provide a general oversight on all national security and peripheral matters. In sum, the five generals, all retired and wearing business suits, occupied an institutional framework from which they provided direct supervision over state politics until just recently.

This system of oversight was a new development. In the political era since 1950, even though all but one of the presidents was retired military, the principle military influence had been through the active duty force -- the Chief of the Turkish General Staff and the Force Commanders. But Evren effectively eased the active duty generals out of the immediate picture. To date, Evren and his partners have indeed stepped down, civilians control the presidency and the parliament, and active duty generals seem to be focusing on military concerns like force modernization and training.

8. To return the military to the barracks. From the beginning, the coup leaders were sincere about removing the active duty military, including themselves, from political participation in accordance with Ataturk's admonition. The coup was necessary not only to save the nation from crisis, but also because it prevented the military from becoming involved in the political imbroglio of pre - 12 September. The coup and administrative takeover were led by the five top generals, supported by the total force, but the lower levels within the military were prevented from hands - on involvement in the coup's aftermath.

Following the coup, as martial law was declared and

enforced, virtually the entire military establishment was involved. However, as domestic order was restored, the military sought to turn over duties to the rural Gendarme and the overhauled national police quickly. That process, while cautious and gradual, resulted in the lifting of martial law in a number of the western, rural provinces prior to November 1983. 54 As the police became more competent and trustworthy, even in those provinces where martial law remained in effect, the troop presence and involvement dropped dramatically on the orders of Evren.

The parliamentary elections in November 1983 elicited a voter turnout of 90%. 55 The campaign leading up to the election was low key, reflecting the political blandness of the three candidates and the fact that virtually all the controversial candidates had been excluded by the military wielding its veto. Ozal and his Motherland Party (MP) were able to garner 45% of the popular vote, and due to a percentage system of vote barriers, which excluded independents, Ozal and the MP won 212 seats in the 400 seat GNA. Evren held sway on internal security and political decisions, while Ozal was given a

free hand in running the economy and foreign affairs. Ozal's blatant economic relationships with Libya, Iran, and even the Soviets went uncriticized by Evren. Ozal's grip on power continued beyond the 1989 departure of the five generals.

That the generals had closed down for all time the RPP, M. Kemal's party, was indicative of the extent of change that had taken place in Turkish politics. Though closing down the RPP meant severing a major link with the Kemalist legacy the generals did not hesitate to do it. The old army-party-bureaucry alliance that had sustained the Kemalist tradition had already broken down. The generals apparently saw no harm in confirming what had been the status quo for some time.

The generals were equally forthright in their abolition of May 27 as a public holiday marking the anniversary of the 1960 coup. This defused a longstanding grievance among the JP constituency. But considering the vast amount of energy expended during the 1960s to preserve the 1960 coup, it was yet another indication of how things had changed.

Still, the generals professed allegiance to

Kemalism with an intensity surpassing even previous military regimes. One observer notes that "the reindulcation of pragmatic Kemalist principles, especially among the young, remains the overriding objective of their military takeover." 56 To that end, the generals undertook purges in the schools and universities of "teachers suspected of holding radical political views incompatible with Kemalism." 57

One may agree with the view that an underlying motive of the 1980 coup was the restoration of 'ideological Kemalism'. They were reacting to circumstances of the late 1970s when the Kemalist state came under quite severe ideological challenges, i.e. Marxist-Leninist, Islamic, and radical nationalist; and so the 1980 intervention differed substantially from the previous ones in terms of priorities, emphases, and style. Previous military regimes attempted to bring statist solutions to the economy whereas the 1980 regime, having identified political/ideological challenges to the state as the number one priority, was content to let the economy be run by those whose economic philosophy they did not necessarily endorse. Gen. Evren was addressing the crowds with statements like:

Look at the developed countries. They attach more weight to the private sector. Private sector whips up competition, raises quality, provided that the state provides the infrastructure, and establishes the necessary controls." 58

When the generals allowed elections in 1983, their initial intention was to "create a broad centrist, Kemalist movement along the lines of the French Gaullists." 59 But as popular support for such a movement was not forthcoming, the generals commissioned retired general Turgut Sunlap with the task of setting up a party to appeal primarily to the broad constituency of the center-right. But the election did not go quite as the generals anticipated. Apart from the Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP) of Sunlap, two other parties were allowed to contest the elections: Populist Party (PP), the center-left loyal opposition, and Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party (MP) which was designed to appeal to the now-outlawed JP constituency. As it turned out, MP collected the votes not only of JP but of the centrists impressed with Ozal's performance as economic czar during 1980-82.

Ozal's decisive victory raised an immediate question: whether the military would accept the verdict of the electorate. After all, the generals had staked out

their prestige with their open support for Sunlap's NDP.

But the generals had more substantive objections to Ozal:

...many senior officers had reservations about Ozal. They treat him as an upstart, suspiciously bored by the tenets of Kemal Ataturk. They look balefully at Ozal's past links with the proscribed National Salvation Party, which espoused Islamic fundamentalism. Some leading soldiers interpret his monetarist fervor and let-rip capitalism as a breach with Turkey's traditional economic nationalism." 60

#### Neo-Kemalism

This brings us to the whole question of the generals' relation to Kemalism. Closing down RPP, establishing a working relationship with Ozal, and contemplating things such as the break up of state monopolies indicate a revision of Kemalist doctrines to the extent that might justify the label 'neo-Kemalism'.

Kemalism was predicated upon the preponderance of the state elites over elites deriving their power or authority from other sources, e.g. businessmen, clergy, and politicians. During the single-party era the state elite controlled large segments of the economy as well as the political process. With the advent of pluralism, particularly from 1950 onwards, the momentum turned against state elites, politically and economically. The military

regimes of 1960-61 and 1971-73 tried to bolster the position of the state elites, but there were economic and political forces resisting such efforts.

With Ozal as Prime Minister, it was noted by observers that the influence of top generals will be "shadowy but powerful affecting primarily the areas of foreign affairs, defense, internal security...whereby Ozal could start with a fairly free hand in domestic policy while the generals have the last word on national security.." 61

The contours of neo-Kemalism have thus appeared, the main focus of which is the state itself. The experience of the 1970s seems to have convinced the army that the most serious threat to the Kemalist state could come from within the state institutions. But the 1980 coup occurred in conditions of near societal breakdown. The economy, the political system, and the state institutions were all responsible for the almost total collapse. The 1980 regime was never under the illusion that all these problems could be solved by a stronger dose of state activism, as was the case back in 1960 and 1971. Instead they opted for continuity in economic matters, leaving Ozal in charge of the economy free to implement his monetarist measures.



Conclusion--The Relevance of Kemalism and  
Prospects for Future Military Intervention

In Turkey, the parameters of political debate are still framed largely in terms of Kemalism. This is particularly true of the Turkish military, who have been instrumental in framing the parameters of political debate since 1960. Historian Udo Steinbach still views Kemalism as a "dynamic force for social transformation", 62 while Turkish historian Sabri Akural asserts that "in Turkey today, Kemalist principles are no longer at work as a major force in the process of social change." 63 But even Akural concedes that Kemalism "remains an intellectual force of considerable importance." 64

While Kemalism continues to be relevant to the Turkish political process, new social forces have created a situation in which the primary assumptions of Kemalism have come under increased scrutiny. The Turkish military will no doubt sustain its efforts to shore up Kemalism as a credible intellectual force in tune with contemporary realities, and as such Kemalism will continue to be

relevant in the political sense. As social change in Turkey continues, however, new challenges will be posed to Kemalism. How the military deals with these challenges will be the major axis of Turkish politics for years to come.

Of late, the military has tolerated the increasing, albeit meager, support Ozal's government has provided to Islamic groups in recent years, realizing perhaps that a degree of desecularization is inevitable and ultimately a stabilizing mechanism for Turkish society. Islam's growing importance is being husbanded by the central government, and the control this allows apparently is reassuring to the military leadership. At a minimum, this impingement of a fundamental Kemalist principle is being quietly accepted by most military leaders.

President Ozal's vigorous support of the U.S. and its allies in the Gulf war was vigorously opposed, however, by the chief of the Turkish armed forces, who resigned in protest over Ozal's Gulf policies. Domestic opinion was said to be against Ozal's stance as well. Though no further details are yet available, it seems clear that the chief's resignation was a reaction to Ozal's intrusion into such a crucial foreign policy/national security issue,

until recently the exclusive domain of Turkey's military and foreign policy establishment.

Millions of dollars worth of modern allied equipment is being left behind and transferred to the Turkish armed forces, however, and significantly higher levels of military assistance have been promised Turkey by the U.S. and other allied nations. These factors may have contributed to the muted response the military made to Ozal's bold grab of the foreign and security policy reins.

Prior to the Gulf war, in early in 1990, Ozal confronted the military by appointing his man to the top armed forces command. Excluding the five generals in the 1980 coup, no active duty officers have sought or gained power on a national level in Turkey for twenty years. The current crop of generals has no former coup leaders in the ranks. These factors point to an increasingly marginalized position for Turkey's military leadership.

But fundamental problems remain for President Ozal, including labor unrest, runaway inflation, and general economic malaise caused by the Gulf war. These troubles have combined to make Ozal broadly unpopular, and his ruling Motherland Party could be toppled in elections next year. Still, short of a societal breakdown similar to

1980, it appears that the Turkish armed forces will play an increasingly diminished role in the affairs of state for the foreseeable future, even though Kemalist reforms continue to be gradually eroded.

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